

Literary Skills

Chapters 4-6 *Point of View*

■ Which Pair of Shoes?

One reason *To Kill a Mockingbird* engaged readers' imaginations so easily may be due to Lee's choice of *point of view*.

Point of view is the voice or vantage point the author uses to tell a story. An author has a number of choices to make when selecting the point of view. Some of those choices are outlined below.

1. The story may be told in

- first person, by an "I," who reports personal thoughts as well as the actions of others;
- limited third person, by a narrator who reports thoughts of one person (using "he" or "she" pronouns) and the actions of characters;
- omniscient third person, by an all-knowing narrator who reports the thoughts and actions of all characters.

2. The narrator in the story may be a minor character or a major character—or an "outsider" who does not take part in the story at all.

3. The story may be told as though events are occurring at this moment or as a record of past events—or as a mix of both.

Harper Lee chose first-person point of view to tell her story. She presents the story through the eyes of a major character, Scout Finch. Scout's viewpoint shifts between that of an adult and a child as she unrolls the story of past events.

Directions

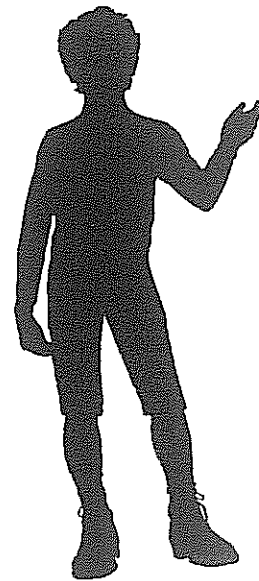
Take Atticus' advice and step into another person's shoes by imagining how each character listed would react to the situations below. You may write the reaction using first person ("I") or third person ("he" or "she") point of view.

1. Jem and Scout stare at Dill when they first see him until Dill finally speaks.

- a. Jem _____

- b. Dill _____

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2. Jem runs into the Radleys' yard and touches the house on a dare.

a. Jem _____

b. Nathan Radley _____

3. On the first day of first grade, Scout demonstrates that she can read.

a. Atticus _____

b. Miss Caroline _____

4. Scout tries to explain to Miss Caroline why Walter Cunningham will not accept a quarter to buy himself lunch.

a. Miss Caroline _____

b. Walter _____

5. Calpurnia punishes Scout for misbehaving at lunch while the family has a guest.

a. Atticus _____

b. Calpurnia _____

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6. Dill tells exciting stories about his train trip from Meridian, Mississippi, to Maycomb.

a. Jem _____

b. Dill _____

7. Atticus catches the children playing the Boo Radley game.

a. Boo Radley _____

b. Atticus _____

8. Jem goes back to the Radley property for his pants.

a. Jem _____

b. Nathan Radley _____

One Step Further

Choose one of the scenes from the previous activity. Then in a small group, debate which narrator—Scout or the other two characters listed—you would prefer to tell the story. Consider what special information each narrator could contribute and how each would tell the incident (style or tone). Use the lines below to record your discussion and decision.

Scene: _____

Narrator: Scout _____

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Special information the narrator could contribute _____

Narrator's style or tone _____

Second narrator: _____

Special information the narrator could contribute _____

Narrator's style or tone _____

Third narrator: _____

Special information the narrator could contribute _____

Narrator's style or tone _____

Group choice for narrator and reasons for choosing that narrator _____
